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Scholarly Personae and Twentieth-Century Historians

Explorations of a Concept¹

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MINEKE BOSCH

In this article Bosch argues in favour of an understanding of the concept of 'scientific persona' in which embodiment means more than the conclusion that everything that men and women do originates in or arises from a body. Following historians of science and their biographical achievements, Bosch considers being perceived as a reliable and trustworthy scientist or scholar as the core of the formation of a scientific/scholarly identity or persona that scientists and scholars can perform in a specific context. They do so with an eye to how other scientists perform their identities and with the creative use of old and new repertoires of scientific performance and social constructions of identity (for instance in terms of gender, class or race) that contribute to scientific authority. By focussing on the scientific or scholarly persona or the self-fashioning in biographies of scholars and scientists, such works can elucidate the epistemology of a discipline or field of research, especially with respect to the question of who earns scientific authority on what grounds. After a thorough discussion of the relevant literature relating to scientific biography or the biographical approach to historiography in which the concept of persona plays a role, Bosch, by way of a light exercise, applies her definition of persona to the analysis of an eclectically selected group of Dutch historians, men and women.

Wetenschappelijke personae en twintigste-eeuwse historici. Verkenning van een concept
Bosch pleit in dit artikel voor een opvatting van het concept 'persona' waarin *embodiment* of belichaming meer is dan de vaststelling dat alles wat mensen doen een oorsprong heeft in of voortkomt uit een lichaam. In navolging van wetenschapshistorici en hun biografische verrichtingen ziet Bosch het worden

waargenomen als een betrouwbaar en geloofwaardig wetenschapper als de kern van de vorming van een wetenschappelijke identiteit of wetenschappelijke persona die wetenschapsbeoefenaars in een bepaalde tijd en context kunnen aannemen. Zij doen dat met oog voor hoe collega-wetenschappers dat doen en door de creatieve inzet van oude en nieuwe repertoires van wetenschappelijk gedrag en van sociale constructies van identiteit (bijvoorbeeld van gender, ras of klasse) die bij kunnen dragen aan wetenschappelijk gezag. Door te focussen op de wetenschappelijke persona of de *self-fashioning* van de wetenschapper in de biografie van wetenschappers en geleerden kan de biografie licht werpen op de epistemologie van een vak, met name waar het gaat om wie wel of niet op welke gronden wetenschappelijk gezag verwerft. Na een bespreking van de relevante literatuur op het gebied van wetenschapsbiografie en de biografische benadering van historiografie waarin het persona-begrip een rol speelt, past Bosch haar concept van persona bij wijze van oefening toe op een eclectisch samengestelde groep Nederlandse historici, mannen en vrouwen.

Bielefeld war zudem ein Layout; Texte waren, als Beweis für Empirie, mit Grafiken und Tabellen gespickt, auch in den Fussnoten. Dann der raue, unduldsame Ton im Kolloquium, in dem der Vortragende bewusst scharf angegriffen und theoretische Unterfütterung eingefordert wurde. [...] “‘Theoriegesättigt’ war ein sehr, sehr positives Attribut’, und diese Orientierung wurde bis in die Kleidung hinein visuell kommuniziert: Cordjackett, weisse Rollkragenpullover, bis an den Hals zugeknöpfte schwarze Hemden.”²

In this way the German biography critic Thomas Etzemüller recapitulates the memories that the historian Valentin Groebner drew on from his days as a doctoral student in Bielefeld around 1990. Etzemüller uses this autobiographical act as an example of his thesis that historians engage in an ongoing identity performance in the daily practices of the historical discipline – in the negotiations over institutional power, the guarding of

1 This article is based on the paper presented at the Royal Netherlands Historical Association (KNGH) in The Hague on 28 November 2014. I studied the scientific persona during a three months fellowship at the Max Planck Institut für Wissenschaftsgeschichte in Berlin, 2010, which resulted among other things in: Mineke Bosch, ‘Persona and the Performance of Identity: Parallel Developments in the Biographical Historiography of Science and Gender, and the Related Uses of Self Narrative’, *L’Homme: Auto/Biographie* 24:2 (2013) 11–22. This study paved the way for the international research project Scientific

Personae in Cultural Encounters carried by Kirsti Niskanen (Stockholm University), Kaat Wils (Leuven University) and myself, two post docs and three PhD researchers. It is financed by the Knut and Alice Wallenberg Foundation. I thank the reviewers and editors, Raingard Esser, Kirsti Niskanen, Herman Paul, Catrien Santing, Kaat Wils and the members of the promoclub for their valuable comments.

2 Thomas Etzemüller, ‘Ins “wahre” rücken. Selbstdarstellung im Wissenschaftsbetrieb’, *Merkur. Deutsche Zeitschrift für europäisches Denken*, 69:797 (2015) 31–47.

implicit codes and norms, dress, gestures and bodily behaviour, the tone of voice, housing and the uses of design. According to him, such ‘field specific’ performances are social and relational and aim at becoming a (Foucaultian) subject in which (historical) ‘truth’ resides.

In connection with Etzemüller’s emphasis on performance as part of historical knowledge and practice, I would like to argue for a conception of scholarly or scientific persona as a (truly) embodied performance of scholarly or scientific identity that makes use of cultural and scientific repertoires of conduct in order to convince professional peers and the wider audience of the scholar’s or scientists’ reliability and credibility.³ I do so in response to how the convener of the KNHG conference *Naar eer en geweten. Beroepsethiek en de persona van de historicus* (The Hague, 28 November 2014), Herman Paul, recently put the concept of persona to use in his studies of the historical profession. I am definitely inspired by his work, but I would like to advocate a more outspoken role for identity performance and embodiment in the persona concept, one that also takes wider aspects of social identity into account.

As historians will probably not all be familiar with the concept of persona as it emerged in science history, I will give some background to this development first and compare it with the way in which Paul came to use the concept of persona in the study of historiography. I will then come up with a more detailed definition of scholarly or scientific persona. Finally I will apply the concept in an explorative discussion of Dutch historians which, together with the examples I mention in the historiographical part, give an impression of what the study of the scholarly persona of historians could tell us about historians and the knowledge they produce.

Scientific persona in the history of science

There is no doubt that the concept of persona in science studies is intrinsically connected to new ways of looking at identity as an ongoing, collective, fragmented, cultural and contextual process that emerged in the 1980s and 1990s. For me, the roots of the concept lie in Steven Shapin’s thesis that ‘the identity of individuals making assertions’ and ‘the credibility of those assertions’ were intertwined.⁴ This thesis was an outcome of Shapin’s biographical study of Robert Boyle in which he applied new conceptions

3 In order to evade the English translation of ‘wetenschapper’ as ‘scholar or scientist’, I will use ‘scholarly persona’ when it concerns historians and ‘scientific persona’ in the case of (natural) scientists.

4 Steven Shapin, ‘Who was Robert Boyle?: The Creation and Presentation of an Experimental Identity’, in: idem, *A Social History of Truth: Civility and Science in Seventeenth-Century England* (Chicago, London 1994) 126–192, 126.

of identity.⁵ In order to understand Boyles's immense impact on science, Shapin showed how Boyle, when breaking new ground as an experimental scientist, had deployed both old and new repertoires of conduct to construct a scientific identity that was credible and reliable in the eyes of his fellow scientists and the wider public. Thus, Boyle fashioned a scientific self as a free and independent aristocratic scholar, as a disciplined and modest Christian virtuoso and as an experimental scientist who observed new rules of transparency and sharing knowledge, for instance. When combined, these various repertoires resulted in a new type of 'gentleman scientist', who managed to maintain a good balance between the active, worldly life and the contemplative life in seclusion. His reliability was suggested by his freedom of movement and the disinterestedness he could afford to display on the basis of his aristocratic descent and, not least, his large fortune. Indeed his financial independence gave him a head start on the Oxbridge academic scholars, who developed their scientific activities in salaried employment so that doubt could be cast on the independence of their opinions.

In 1995 Shapin again reflected on the importance of the scientist's credibility in an assessment of scientific value. He argued that there was actually no limit to the ways in which credibility is secured, 'and therefore, no limit to the considerations to which the analyst of science might give attention'. He then mentions the usual means to assess a scientific claim, such as the plausibility of the claim, the known reliability of the methods used and so forth, to end the summary with less familiar ways to assess scientific work:

the personal reputation of the claimants or the reputation of the platform from which they speak; knowledge of the friends and allies of claimants, including their personal reputation and power; calculations of the likely consequences of withholding assent; claimants' class, sex, age, race, religion or nationality and the characteristics associated with these; [...] the demeanor of claimants and the manner in which claims are delivered; minute aspects of the life-histories of those assessing claims and their knowledge of the life histories of those making them. Again, in principle, there is no reason why an inquiry into the grounds of scientific credibility might not find itself concerned with the investment portfolio's of individual scientists [...] or what they eat in the morning [...].⁶

5 Most prominent Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York 1959), with his emphasis on playing a role that is expected by the audience in a specific setting.

6 Steven Shapin, 'Cordelia's Love: Credibility and the Social Studies of Science', in: idem, *Never Pure: Historical Studies of Science as if it was Produced by People with Bodies, Situated in Time, Space,*

Culture and Society, and Struggling for Credibility and Authority (Baltimore 2010) 21; first published in *Perspectives on Science* 3:3 (1995). Lawrence and Shapin probed the dietetics of scientists in their edited volume: C. Lawrence and S. Shapin, *Science Incarnate: Historical Embodiments of Natural Knowledge* (Chicago, London 1998) 44.

Shapin's contributions were important for historians of science in that he resolved a basic tension or even a paradox inherent in the genre of scientific biography before and after the social turn in science history. By showing the intrinsic connection between the individual scientist and the practices of everyday life and institutions of science through notions such as credibility and reliability that lodged in specific scholarly identities, Shapin gave science biography a new meaningful function in science history as – in his own words – a form of 'practical epistemology'.⁷

The emphasis on reliability that Shapin defined as the core of the scientific identity of the individual scientist was taken up by Lies Wesseling in a fascinating study of the dazzling success of the American developmental psychologist Judith Harris (1938). In the 1990s Harris had stepped from the margins of the profession into its spotlight with a theory on the influence of peers rather than parents on the education of children. Harris had no academic position, but the book she published, *The Nurture Assumption*, became an immediate bestseller and led to a paradigm shift in the discipline.⁸ How could that success be explained, taking gender and her institutional situation into account? In her explanation Wesseling made the concept of scientific persona central.⁹ Her analysis of the book showed that in between the lines Harris systematically fashioned a 'self' as a sick old woman and a grandmother. In so doing, Wesseling argues, Harris directed attention away from her 'womanly body', while at the same time she tapped into some ancient repertoires of scholarly or scientific identity – as the disembodied and even sick scientist, as well as of the disinterested, selfless and spiritual scholar. Harris thus invoked the familiar image of the ascetic and saintly scientist or genius, who had been set alight by a divine spark, while at the same time she contrasted her own disinterested position with that of the salaried colleagues at Harvard who defended their paradigms in their own interest. This went down well with the reviewers and the general readers, but in the end also with her professional peers. The example shows that by making use of old repertoires of scientific being or the wielding of a specific persona enabled Harris to become unmatched in credibility and trustworthiness, and to overcome obstacles for women and other outsiders to be perceived as reliable.

Wesseling took the concept of the scientific persona from a thematic issue of *Science in Context* on 'Scientific Personae and their Histories' (2003). In their introduction the editors, Lorraine Daston and Otto Sibum, define persona (Latin for mask) as a collective identity that mediates between the private person and the public institution. Personae are not just roles or masks that can be switched at will but are 'cultural identities' that shape 'the individual in body and mind', and at the same time, create 'a collective

7 Shapin, 'Who was Robert Boyle?', 126.

8 Judith Rich Harris, *The Nurture Assumption: Why Children turn out the Way they do* (New York 1998).

9 E. Wesseling, 'Judith Rich Harris: The Miss Marple of Developmental Psychology', *Science in Context* 17:3 (2004) 293-314.

with a shared and recognizable physiognomy'.¹⁰ In the issue the emphasis indeed is mainly on scientific personae as 'collective identities' or 'types' such as the (model of the) seventeenth-century learned lady or the modest, early nineteenth-century autodidact working class hero. Some contributions address scientific personae as context-bound cultural patterns or habits, such as the singing of *Liedertafel* as a common practice in the emerging discipline of the nineteenth-century German *Naturforscher*, or the 'gelernte Abwesenheit' or 'learned professor's absentmindedness' as a consequence of changing ideas and practices after the abolishment of celibacy as a rule among scientists.

Though all these contributions on scientific persona as a collective cultural identity are fascinating and important, I do miss a systematic link with reliability, even if an individual author like Gadi Algazi mentions the relation of the 'learned habitus of absent-mindedness' to social prestige and cultural power.¹¹ The connection with reliability is not wholly absent, though, and comes up especially in the biographical contributions in which scientific persona is discussed for an individual scientist. An interesting example is the study of the physicist Werner Heisenberg who despite his changing views on objectivity (as no longer tenable in quantum physics) had nonetheless trained himself to speak 'as a scientist' according to the habits of the impersonal, disembodied, observer 'from nowhere'.¹² His unadorned non-rhetorical way of speech, that especially after the thundering Nazi-oratory had resonance, gave the audience the impression 'that every one of his words is governed by the responsibility of the scientist, that for him it is never a matter of brilliant formulation, never of applause, but always and exclusively of the facts of the matter'.¹³ Janet Browne's contribution on Darwin, who staged himself as the sick scientist as well as a (royal) celebrity, likewise shows how these aspects of Darwin's self-fashioning enhanced his credibility as a scientist and cemented his eternal fame.¹⁴

Historians and their knowledge – from 'texts and thoughts' to performance and practice

In the Dutch speaking historical community Jo Tollebeek paved the way for a new 'anthropological' approach to the study of history (historiography), historians and historical culture with his rich biographical study of the Belgian

10 Lorraine Daston and Otto Sibum, 'Introduction: Scientific Personae and Their Histories', in: idem (eds.), *Scientific Personae and their Histories*. Special issue of *Science in Context* 16:1-2 (2003) 1-8, 2 DOI 10.1111/hith.10717.

11 Gadi Algazi, 'Scholars in Households: Refiguring the Learned Habitus, 1480-1550', *Science in Context* 16:1-2 (2003) 9-42 DOI 10.1017/s0269889703000681.

12 Cathryn Carson, 'Objectivity and the Scientist: Heisenberg Rethinks', *Science in Context* 16:1-2 (2003) 243-269. Thomas Nagel coined the positivist concept of objectivity as the 'view from nowhere'.

13 Cited in *ibid.*, 255, from a journalist's report 'Die Stimme Heisenbergs' (1953).

14 Janet Browne, 'Charles Darwin as a Celebrity', *Science in Context* 16:1-2 (2003) 175-194.

historian Paul Fredericq.¹⁵ In his introduction to *Fredericq & Zonen* Tollebeek explains that in order to understand the modern historical profession as more than a process of professionalisation and institutionalisation, he had decided to study the *Alltagsgeschichte*, or the daily routines of the evolving historical profession, through the lens of one example. In doing so, however, he expected to uncover the ‘historical regime’ of the emerging historical profession in which ethical and esthetical values and epistemological notions were intertwined with ideological convictions and emotional dispositions. How exactly he sees the relation between the practices and convictions and the knowledge produced however, is not spelled out. Indeed, Tollebeek studies the way in which Fredericq was one of the historians who performed his role in the construction of the new historians’ habitus or collective identity, but how precisely did he earn his role in being part of the profession – knowing also what Tollebeek tells us: that Fredericq was in fact a mediocre historian who fell short of his self-proclaimed goals?¹⁶ Certainly Tollebeek pays attention to the formation of an epistemic community that is inherent in the institutional and commemorative practices in which Fredericq was engaged. Moreover, Tollebeek is aware of Fredericq’s uses of the personal and has eyes for the much more intricate relation between public and private life than the cult of impersonality in science has dictated for scientists and historians alike. Nevertheless, he wonders how much ‘distortion’ is in the obsessive, even neurotic self-representation (for example in his diaries). Tollebeek even refers to this as ‘self-fashioning’. In doing so, however, he fails to recognise recent autobiographical theory or theory on life writing, that is not so much interested in distortion (or conversely, authenticity or truth), or the concealment of a true and essential self, but rather in the way in which a self or an identity is represented or fashioned, and always in a specific social and relational context. Therefore he does not see in this activity a (field specific) form of scholarly identity formation that is crucial for Fredericq’s ‘becoming a historian’ with the power of truth.

Herman Paul, whilst studying historiography, developed a similar interest in the practices of history, the performativity of historical knowledge production and historians’ scientific selves as having an impact on matters of epistemology, which shows in a rich output of studies.¹⁷ In the article

15 Jo Tollebeek, *Fredericq & Zonen. Een antropologie van de moderne geschiedwetenschap* (Amsterdam 2008).

16 Tollebeek shows himself indebted to post-Kuhnian social studies of science, mentioning Steven Woolgar, Robert Kohler and Bruno Latour for their studies of laboratory culture. He also invokes Pierre Bourdieu’s key concepts of habitus and dispositions.

17 Herman Paul, “‘De Hollandsche meesters der streng-analytischen methode’”. Robert Fruin als vader van de Nederlandse geschiedwetenschap’, in: Herman Paul and Henk te Velde (eds.), *Het vaderlands verleden. Robert Fruin en de Nederlandse geschiedenis* (Amsterdam 2010) 221-248; Herman Paul, ‘Voorbeeld en voorganger. Robert Fruin en Godefroid Kurth als vaders van de geschiedwetenschap’, *BMGN-Low Countries Historical Review* 126:1 (2011) 30-53.

‘Performing History’ (2011) Paul positions himself explicitly in the domain of virtue epistemology, or the multifaceted study of knowledge as primarily a function of the virtuousness of intellectual agents and the epistemic community to which they belong. He eloquently defends the study of the historian’s epistemic or intellectual virtues that must be understood as an overlapping mix of acquired or innate cognitive skills (or abilities) and character traits that enable the production of historical knowledge.¹⁸ Indeed, knowledge acquisition is not possible without the formation of ‘intellectual character’ or ‘scholarly identity’ that is formed within disciplinary contexts, and that all have their different ‘ethos’.

In his 2014 article ‘What is a scholarly persona?’ Paul explicitly uses the concept of persona for the first time, and presents it as central in a philosophy of history.¹⁹ The primary challenge to meet with the concept for him is to understand and evaluate historiographical diversity as more than differences in (narrative) style. Unlike Hayden White, Paul sees historiographical styles as different versions of historical ‘doing’ or of ‘being a historian’, of different ‘types of historians’ defined in terms of ‘virtues’. ‘Types of historians’ that he mentions here and in related articles are for instance, the archival historian who pursues ‘the heroic study of facts’, feminist historians who passionately strive to make women visible and therefore criticise basic assumptions of historical knowledge, biographers and statistics-oriented Cliometrists. As these historians have different hierarchies of aims or ‘desires’, they mobilise different ‘dispositions’ or ‘repertoires of virtues and skills’, though of course the baseline is that their first and foremost aim is to pursue historical understanding (not to use the terms knowledge or truth). Thus Paul explicitly connects the scholarly persona to loosely defined intellectual, epistemic or cognitive virtues as *qualities of historians*, rather than as properties of their theories and work.²⁰

The focus on epistemic virtues, or practices, abilities and skills (sometimes even innate characteristics) of historians as expressions of their ideals and aims regarding good scholarship has enormously enriched our understanding of the history of historical knowledge production. Both Tollebeek and Paul demonstrate this in their intriguing analyses of historians at work. However, once again I do have a few questions. How can we explain that different scientific or scholarly practices or mixtures of epistemic virtues (such as perseverance, precision, modesty, unadorned writing and so forth) exist not only within the historical discipline, but also in other disciplines? In

18 Herman Paul, ‘Performing History: How Historical Scholarship is Shaped by Epistemic Virtues’, *History and Theory* 50 (2011) 1-19, 1.

19 Herman Paul, ‘What is a Scholarly Persona?: Ten Theses on Virtues, Skills, and Desires’, *History and Theory* 53:3 (2014) 348-371 DOI 10.1111/

hith.10717. The term persona preceded the scholarly persona in: Herman Paul, ‘The Heroic Study of Records: The Contested Persona of the Archival Historian’, *History of the Human Sciences* 26:4 (2013) 67-81.

20 Paul, ‘What is a Scholarly Persona?’, 352.

other words, how should we understand the relation between the doings and the (historical) texts? Tollebeek and Paul both break with classical modernist epistemology in their focus on the historian's practices and performance, but are these practices restricted to (internal historical) ethics and aesthetics or virtues and skills, and how do they know what are relevant practices and what not? Do they draw boundaries for scholarly identity performance where Shapin sees no limits?

In my view, it is here that the embodied and located knowing subject becomes crucial, not just in terms of virtue performance, but especially in terms of the performance of a reliable identity as a function of crucial epistemological values as disinterestedness (or impartiality) and objectivity, but also of social and cultural values. It is important for our understanding of historical knowledge to draw up a typology of (sub)disciplinary styles that co-exist, but I am even more interested in why some historians get their practices and texts recognised as valuable and good (and true) and others not, even if the latter display intellectual skills and virtues according to accepted norms (or better) – and the other way around. Why some mediocre historians acquire laurels while excellent others do not. In my view, it is here where power comes in, and changing social forms of distinction and hierarchy such as on the basis of race, class, gender, wealth, domestic situation, religion, or political affiliation that shows in attitudes and behaviour that are not only discipline specific. For gender this seems already well-known, but in the study of science (and the historical profession) until now the impact of gender is mostly studied from the perspective of how women are excluded, and scarcely of how men are included, or what gendered identity markers have to do with epistemology.²¹

Personae as embodied identity – lessons drawn

The German biographer Thomas Etzemüller seems to be an exception in taking the embodied masculine identity a step further. His analysis of the *Werdegang* of the famous German historian Werner Conze may demonstrate what I mean.²² In order to overcome the traditional (naturalised) division between 'texts and thought' and 'lived life', Etzemüller focused on the way in which Conze gradually developed a 'subjectivity' as 'historian'. He showed

21 An exception is the recent study by Falco Schnicke, *Die männliche Disziplin. Zur Vergeschlechtlichung der deutschen Geschichtswissenschaft, 1780-1900* (Göttingen 2015). He builds on and further develops Bonnie Smith, *The Gender of History: Men, Women, and Historical Practice* (Cambridge MA, London 1998).

Schnicke came to my attention after this article was finished.

22 Thomas Etzemüller, 'How to make a Historian: Problems in writing Biographies of Historians', *Storia della Storiografia* 53 (2008) 46-57. An English article on Fredericq's 'stormy family' by Tollebeek appeared in the same volume.

how Conze transformed from ‘anybody’ into ‘someone’ in the historical profession. In four steps – of learning to observe, becoming visible, attracting attention and ‘becoming a man’ –, a boy named Werner became ‘a subject, known as professor Conze’, to cite Etzemüller. Using Conze’s professional and private correspondence, for example, Etzemüller could trace several steps in his professional behaviour – from drawing up a programme to constantly hammering on *his* research programme of social history. This development went hand in hand with a strikingly changing voice and attitude in the correspondence, from elaborate, courteous and polite letters to his superiors, to downright authoritarian styled communications sent to lesser gods by his secretary. Gradually also his manner of dress and speech changed and he became less spontaneous, more sober and more cautious in his way of expressing himself, getting more in line with the historical establishment. Even though, like Paul Fredericq, Conze knew that he was qualified but not a genius, the professoriate finally created the platform for his work to get the status of certified knowledge.

The difference between the biographer Etzemüller and the two historiographers who all emphasise the importance of the performative aspects of ‘doing history’ is in their thinking about identity.²³ Etzemüller sees identity formation as an embodied and social practice in a broader perspective when he pays attention to Conze’s changing hair and dress that became increasingly conformist, and suggestive of the impersonal *Verfasser* (Vf) identity that scholars cultivated in the age of objectivity.²⁴ In this attention to bodily practices he shows himself indebted to new conceptions of identity as always embodied, and also that embodiment is not only a feminine but also a masculine phenomenon. Thus, he takes embodiment seriously, doing more than stating that the exercise of virtues and skills have a material, bodily origin or vessel. It means that identity also resides in the body or bodily practices such as dress style, tone of voice, haircut, dietetics and physical exercise.

Summarising the historiographical debate I draw the following lessons for an understanding of the concept of scholarly or scientific persona: 1) Central to the fashioning of a scholarly or scientific persona is the creation of a credible or reliable scientific identity. 2) There is a difference between the social (collective) and relational process of individual identity construction and ‘collective identity formation’ (a group’s common understanding of self). 3) Scientific persona as the individual scientist’s identity formation (or self-fashioning) makes use of ‘ideal-types’, collective stories and myths of knowledge-making, but also draws on collective images or repertoires of social and cultural authority and power. That is why not only social

23 Thomas Etzemüller, *Biographien. Lesen – erforschen – erzählen* (Frankfurt, New York 2012).

24 Etzemüller, ‘How to make a Historian’; idem, *Biographien*, 54.

categories of class, gender and sexuality, race and religion, but also social aspects such as wealth or physical health, play a role. 4) There is some chronology in the emergence of new collective stories and images of scholarly or scientific conduct that are produced in fiction, necrologies, biographical acts, ancient or new cultural categories of being a scholar or a scientist or 'the collective scientific ethos' related to the specific historical context. Individual identities, however, are always formed by way of bricolage and do often rely on a mixture of new and old repertoires of scholarly and scientific conduct. 5) Scientific personae are always embodied identities that should not be regarded as contingent or private aspects of the self. The scholarly identity makes use of specific bodily practices such as dietetics and routines of physical conduct (sexuality and sports for instance), but also of dress and other tools to keep up the appearance of a 'truth-speaker' – beards and moustaches, or for women 'ascetic dress' or 'comfortable footwear' instead of high heels.

In the following I sketch a few outlines of what the study of scholarly persona of (some) nineteenth and twentieth-century Dutch historians could entail. What would a study of scholarly personae be able to reveal about historians and their profession, and how might that help us to understand better how acceptance and recognition of historians' scholarly work is won (or not)? I am not an expert in this specific field and my choice of historians is therefore arbitrarily related to the literature that I already knew and unsystematically digested for this essay. In doing so I make a division into male and female historians and their scholarly personae, as reliability is differently associated with masculinity and femininity that are both always, but always in different ways, constitutive of identity. However, class will also be discussed in relation to repertoires of the scholarly persona.

Scholarly personae of Dutch historians

Male historians' repertoires of embodied scholarly identity

The reason I would like to start with R.J. (Robert) Fruin (1823-1899) is because he is still seen as the uncontested 'Father of Dutch historiography', and because Tollebeek as well as Paul have paid attention to aspects of his ethos as a historian.²⁵ Both point to the entanglement of ethics and epistemology that they see in his cherishing of virtues such as perseverance, discipline and conscientiousness, accuracy, completeness and fairness in his research. Fruin was reluctant to publish his findings but what he wrote was always unadorned and transparent, which was according to the newer ideals of

25 For Paul see note 17; Jo Tollebeek, 'Een wetenschap van kleine gebaren', in: Paul and Te Velde (eds.), *Het vaderlands verleden*, 17-37.

objective, impartial scholarship. Interestingly, Tollebeek also points out some of his contemporaries' representations of Fruin as 'curiously emotional' and having a 'soft voice and soft hands', but what that could mean is unclear. Likewise Tollebeek's observation that Fruin lived in a house that 'despite the fortune of its owner was modest' remains without any further explanation.²⁶ In fact it is uncertain what Tollebeek thinks about the relation between Fruin's private and public or professional life, other than what he says about the fact that Fruin taught and did research at home. His characterisation of Fruin as practicing a 'domestic scholarship' or as living the life of a celibate who obviously was no longer corrected in his conduct by significant others, is perhaps based on historical evidence, but is seen as just that – private 'vices' of a somewhat weird and one-dimensional scholar. In my view, however, the concept of persona as a function of reliability and credibility seems relevant. I am inclined to state that despite his innovations in the organisation and presentation of his research, Fruin's success may also be explained by the old repertoires of scholarly conduct that he deployed.

Instead of introducing the Rankean seminar in the Netherlands, and thereby breaking away from *ex cathedra* history teaching, Fruin kept on lecturing in a way that at that time was already criticised as 'old school'. What made the lectures 'dusty' however, was not so much the site of the performance, as Ranke also held his ground-breaking seminars at home, nor is it an innate character trait. In fact, I see in Fruin's habits as a lecturer the traditional academic professor who kept a distance from the world/his audience, rather than embracing the conduct of the new, research oriented historian who built a research community while actively exchanging knowledge with his students. His bachelorhood and his 'uneventful' private life for instance, also allowed a perception of Fruin as someone kept far from the businesses of the world all in the interest of holy science. Known as a passionate liberal and party-man at the time of his appointment, the reputation of the ascetic and disinterested monk or the (wealthy but thrifty and equally disinterested) gentleman scholar will have served him well. Interesting and meaningful is that Fruin, who with his brother searched for his aristocratic roots in the English family of his mother, also conceived of the academic world as an 'aristocracy'. The perception of femininity in his appearance (passionate, soft voice, soft hands) might then have underlined his (gentlemanly) distance from the earthly world and manual or physical labour, while his (publicly perceived) celibacy was in line with old repertoires

26 Money (or wealth) is an underrated aspect of (scholarly) identity. An excellent study of the writer Couperus' dealings with money using Goffman's conception of identity is Mary Kemperink, 'Kunstenaar, aristocraat en zakenman.

Louis Couperus' *self-fashioning*', in: Mary Kemperink and Wim van Anrooy (eds.), *Louis Couperus in de spiegel van de Neerlandistiek*. Special issue *Spiegel der Letteren* 55:3 (2013) 375-401.

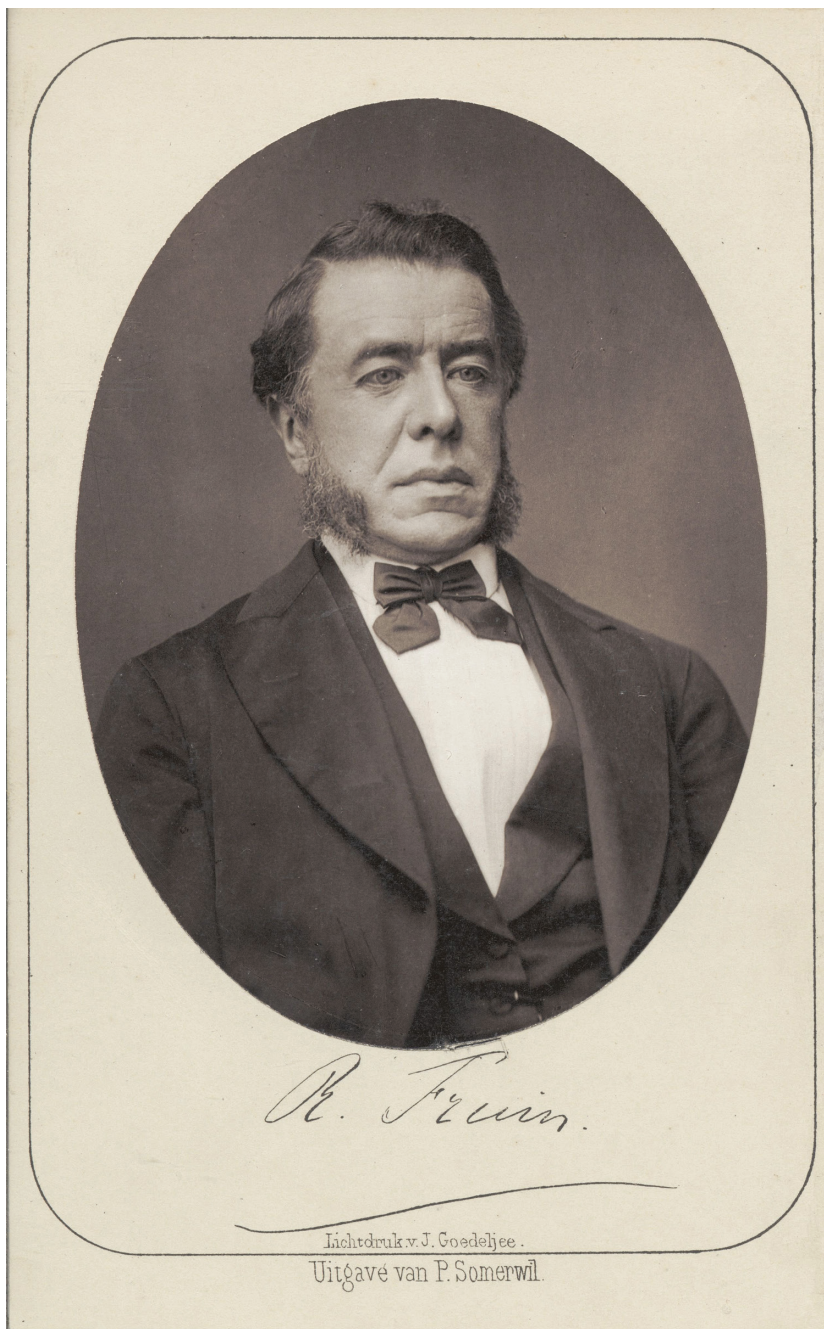
of scholarly identity performance that assessed an immersion in the life of the mind, not hindered by the distractions of the flesh and family life.

It would definitely be interesting to know more about Fruin's dietetics, as well as other bodily and social practices. Was not his 'loneliness' compensated for by the suggestion of a deep friendship with the colleague he was buried with, as well as with other men often perceived as somewhat weird? Why have his friendships with men not seriously been studied yet? Could these perhaps also be seen as repertoires of homosocial (if not homosexual) scholarly bachelorship that in those days were still actively in place in Oxford and Cambridge? Important is also that his self-fashioning as the impartial and 'other-worldly' scientist seems in contrast with his prominent role in the *Leidsch Studenten Corps* as its president in 1846, or his strategic and shrewd politics in matters of faculty and disciplinary business, and academic and wider politics, which in the end perhaps would prove to be the best insurance for the recognition and remembrance of his legacy not just as a historian, but as the father of Dutch historians.²⁷ The conclusion, therefore, could be that Fruin was not so much an eccentric as a result of a life uncorrected by the moral influence of a loving spouse, but that Fruin's self-fashioning as a disembodied gentleman scholar was still so convincing of his trustworthiness that for a long time the merits of his work as an innovative historian or the 'Dutch Ranke' might have been overrated.

That Fruin's scholarly persona was met with some scepticism even in his own time can be seen in the (in)famous series of articles, devoted to Fruin in *De Gids*, by his younger contemporary G.C.W. (Willem) Bijvanck (1848-1925). Bijvanck depicted Fruin maliciously as a lonely man, and a scholar whose works lacked inspiration and showed that he had never known the 'Godly joy of the free and wider life'.²⁸ Fruin had restricted and disciplined himself so much as a professional that the broader view had been lost. In the end the work had been insipidly dull and barren. As his images of Fruin contain some implicit or metaphorical references to sexuality or family life, he thereby put Fruin's celibacy in full view. For contemporaries there must have been associations with Bijvanck's own contrasting life and scholarly/narrative style that was known as having partly been formed in Bohemian Paris, devoted to aesthetics, and as romantic rather than as rational and formal. In contrast to Fruin, Bijvanck was never dull, so to speak. The photograph that Tollebeek published in his book *Mannen van karakter* shows Bijvanck as a vibrantly manly, able-bodied man (even though a later portrait of Bijvanck by Toorop completely reverses that picture which is interesting and demands interpretation!). Also in that respect Bijvanck's bohemian life

27 In Goffman's terms Fruin's shrewd politics would be seen as 'backstage' (*hinter der Bühne*) and contrast to his front stage performance.

28 G.C.W. Byvanck, 'R. Fruin (1823-1899.)' I t/m IV, *De Gids* 63 (1899): http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/_gid001189901_01/_gid001189901_01_0001.php (14 October 2016).



Portrait of Robert Fruin, 1879.

Erfgoed Leiden en Omstreken, number PV50670.

in Paris suggested heterosexual masculinity, again in stark contrast with the perception of Fruin's body as feminine and ascetic.²⁹

It seems Bijvanck was ringing the bell for new repertoires of the scientific persona, even though the older repertoires did not lose out. He wrote his diatribe against Fruin not long after the domestication of the scientist and scholar that, according to Lorraine Daston, took place in the nineteenth century. Already in earlier centuries scholars and scientists had adopted what seem like marriage strategies to ensure a solid social standing, or acquire a scholarly or academic genealogy after the abolishment of celibacy at many European universities. Bijvanck himself had married well with a daughter of the Amsterdam mercantile and financial elite, Clara Cramerus. So did Johan Huizinga (1872-1945) who somewhat later married a wealthy aristocratic girl, Mary Vincentia Schorer. In the twentieth century it seems that the celibate, disembodied male scholar or scientist was increasingly exchanged for the healthy heterosexual family man who earned his scholarly reliability also as a dedicated *pater familias*. In order to build trust in the intellectual capacities as well the leadership capacities that were needed in the era of increasingly big science and institution building, men needed women to support and admire them. 'Ans was zijn beste eigenschap' (Ans was his best character trait), was perhaps the crudest (perceived as funniest) formulation in the necrologies that I browsed in the Dutch scholarly journal *BMGN-Low Countries Historical Review*, but in the paratexts of historical works of course many similar references to the indispensable wife can be found.³⁰ Such observations assist in establishing historical personae as trustworthy family men.

Pieter van Winter (1895-1990) shows that the family man who enjoyed his (second) family life in the provincial town of Groningen held its appeal for scholarly reliability until far into the twentieth century. Perhaps in his case it worked so well because it was coupled with the repertoire of the gentleman scholar. Indeed, no description of him as a historian seems complete without mentioning his aristocratic family background that showed in his demeanour or the distinguished manner of speaking that impressed, according to some biographers, especially in Groningen.³¹ The houses he lived in are remembered, as well as the image of the professor who worked late into the night, as could be deduced from the small and concentrated light from

29 Tollebeek, 'Een wetenschap van kleine gebaren'; Jo Tollebeek, *Mannen van karakter. De wording van de moderne geesteswetenschappen* (Amsterdam 2011).

30 J.C.H. Blom, 'In memoriam A.F. Manning (1929-1991)', *BMGN-Low Countries Historical Review* 107:1 (1992) 47-51. DOI 10.18352/bmgn-lchr.3448. Blom quotes P.W. Klein.

31 M.G. Buist, 'Pieter Jan van Winter', *Jaarboek van de Maatschappij der Nederlandse Letterkunde te Leiden 1990-1991* (Leiden 1992) 166-179; K. van Berkel, 'Winter, jhr. Pieter Jan van (1895-1990)', in: *Biografisch Woordenboek van Nederland: resources*. huygens.knaw.nl/bwn1880-2000/lemmata/bwn6/winter (12 November 2013).

his chambers. That is a well-known trope for scholarly and scientific conduct. Even at night, such anecdotes tell us, he was at work instead of taking his sleep, which is a recurring theme in narratives of scientific discovery. His notorious frugality enhances the picture of the otherworldly gentleman scholar who lived for the mind and not for the matter, even if he was also quite well-off. Of course in itself it is not of interest to know how historians practiced or experienced their sexuality, or how they embodied aristocratic ideals or the ethos of the productive bourgeois for instance in their habits of spending and dealing with money. What is interesting however, is what of the behaviour is shown and known to the world, how this is perceived by and how it impressed fellow historians and the wider audience with the trustworthiness of the man as a good scholar.

In the twentieth century the 'Freudian regime' with its emphasis on actively practiced heterosexuality as a sign of (mental) health became another repertoire for indicating credibility. Greatly in contrast with the disembodied or 'sick' scientists, or the scientists who fathered a family, gradually a sexually active manliness became a way for successful male scholars and scientists to fashion their scholarly or scientific selves. This is shown in the examples of several Nobel-prize-winners who pose as frequenters of striptease bars in order to feed their creative minds, sometimes also as active sportsmen. Famous is James Watson's autobiographical story of the discovery of DNA that reads like a picaresque novel with Watson as the individualistic American, intensely competitive, tennis playing hero who during his work on DNA could also think of his erotic conquests. Interestingly, this repertoire of the heterosexual womanizer can also be found among twentieth-century Dutch male scholars of history.

This new manly, heterosexual regime for scientists might explain why the young P.J. (Pieter) van Winter in the diary that he started on 1 January 1920, carefully indicated with small crosses, the sexual encounters with his young wife, sometimes with a comment.³² Van Winter's diaries show how besides his visits to the archive and the library, he also addressed his sexual self. Diaries are major means to constitute identity using the languages and discourses that circulate and are used for self-understanding. Publicly however, he was never known as a lady-killer so that the crosses could also be interpreted in terms of the young couple's wish for offspring that made use of new techniques of birth planning and control.

Indeed, Van Winter's scholarly persona seems to have been in contradistinction with the way in which several colleagues in the twentieth century started to publicly perform a defiant 'look at me!' identity in which

32 Groningen, RHC Groninger Archieven, Archief P.J.
van Winter, Toegangsnr 2598, inv.nr. 3: dagboeken
van P.J. van Winter.

sexual activity was invoked. Instead of the ascetic identity, historians in the twentieth-century increasingly enacted identities as sexually active men who, at home as well as at work, had women at their disposal to assist them at their work and more. Pieter van Winter's diary testifies at several moments in his life to the fact that not only his spouses, but also other women friends 'copied' for him, but there are also many anecdotes (or telling stories) circulating about womanising or flirtatious professors such as N.W. Posthumus (1880-1960), J.M. (Jan) Romein (1893-1962), and Pieter Geyl (1887-1966), who – at least in his autobiography – beat them all.³³ Geyl in his posthumously edited autobiography presents himself not only intellectually on top, but also physically. Because he is so smart he can hold quite untenable positions, offend his opponents and devour women as playmates. The editors characterise the book as honest and Geyl as making himself vulnerable in revealing so many 'personal' details, whereas I see also the power that is executed by the kind of brawling manly heterosexual and polemical identity that he fashions, and that excludes women from this playing field.

A last word on the importance of dress in the fashioning and communicating of identity. Indeed, taking scholarly identity seriously as an embodied performance, the study of appearance and clothing becomes relevant, also for men. Etzemüller's research on German historians proved this point when he recorded how Werner Conze in his becoming a historian dressed increasingly up to the professorial standard in conformist suits, while the structuralist social historians in Bielefeld were recognisable as part of a particular sub-disciplinary set by their corduroy jackets, white roll neck sweaters and black shirts. It is to that set that the Dutch historian Kees Bertels (1939) also probably conformed when he underlined his anti-establishment standpoint in his promotion of structuralist history by a refusal to wear a tie, also at an official academic ceremony. An anti-establishment identity can also mean not being interested in professional success but living for the truth regardless of the established norms, as another form of being 'disinterested' and therefore independent. The fact that Jan Romein grew a beard and bought an extravagant outfit when he received his inheritance (which made him feel 'like a fascist') is as interesting to know as that he had to be *opgedirkt* (dressed up) by two of

33 Ivo Schöffer has often claimed that Posthumus built for all his sweethearts an archive ('voor ieder liefde een archiefje') which connects male institution building with the restricted entrance (partial exclusion) of women in the profession (Email Maria Grever to me, 29 May 2016). Maria Grever, 'Iongh, Adriana Willemina de (1901-1982)', in: *Biografisch Woordenboek van Nederland*:

<http://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/bwn1880-2000/lemmata/bwn5/longh> (12 November 2013). For Jan Romein's erotic fantasies and flirtatious behaviour; Angenies Brandenburg, *Annie Romein-Verschoor, 1895-1978. Leven en werk* (Amsterdam 1988) 288-291; Pieter Geyl, *Ik die zo weinig in mijn verleden leef. Autobiografie 1887-1940* (Amsterdam 2009).

his friends (both named Dirk) when he first went to visit the parents of his girlfriend. Obviously by then he had become an aspiring intellectual who dressed poorly to suggest perhaps a mixed identity of the socialist anti-establishment intellectual on the one hand, and the otherworldly scholar on the other. Later pictures however, show him dressed more in line with the respectable bourgeois man with a certain standing, though not really interested in the worldly aspects of appearance. Here again, Pieter van Winter's identity as a gentleman stands out in his impeccable outfit. A former student of the *Amsterdamsch Meisjes Lyceum* remembered him as their 'decorative history teacher', a former student at University of Groningen writes about the aristocratic gentlemen with hat.³⁴ His diaries reveal the attention he paid even in his apprentice days to his (and his wife's) clothing when he was in the United States for his research in 1925. He wrote about buying a hat and trousers, as well as a machine to press his suits.

Female historians' repertoires of scholarly identity

In the gendered world we inhabit women have almost always been defined as being rather than doing, as passively immersed in nature rather than actively making culture, and as bodies rather than minds. Until the nineteenth-century women had not been allowed the authority of speech in public sanctuaries as the church or the university. It is therefore no wonder that women scholars and scientists from the moment that they entered universities in the nineteenth century tried to avoid being seen as 'embodied' and marked by sexuality and motherhood. That is also why many of the women historians who entered the profession since the twentieth century made use of similar repertoires as Judith Harris and Marie Curie (1867-1934), who posed as 'brides of science' rather than as wives and mothers, which they were as well.³⁵ Kaat Wils analysed for instance, how Marie Curie fashioned a scientific asceticism as part of the wide-spread symbolic language in which science was seen as sanctified and scientists were supposed to sacrifice themselves or their bodies in the service of science.³⁶

34 *Gedenkboek ter gelegenheid van het 25-jarig bestaan van het gemeentelijk Lyceum voor Meisjes te Amsterdam en het afscheid van Dr Margrita Freie, als rectrix van deze school* (Amsterdam 1950)
41. Van Winter schreef zelf hierin 'Een man over vrouwen'. Bunna Ebels-Hoving, *Geschiedenis als metgezel. Confrontaties met een vak, 1950-2010* (Hilversum 2011) 40.

35 The term 'bride of science' is indebted to Benjamin Woolley, *Ada Lovelace: Bride of Science:*

Romance, Reason and Byron's Daughter (London 1999).

36 Kaat Wils, 'The Revelation of a Modern Saint: Marie Curie's Scientific Asceticism and the Culture of Professionalised Science', in: Evert Peeters, Leen Van Molle and Kaat Wils (eds.), *Beyond Pleasure: Cultures of Modern Asceticism* (New York, Oxford 2011) 171-189.

For this reason and due to the wider gender regime and related legislation that hindered married women's professional lives, many women historians remained unmarried or organised a private life with siblings or women and even men friends, suggestive of celibacy. The independent historian Johanna Naber (1859-1941) famously lived with her eldest brother while taking care of his scholarly household. The first woman to write a historical dissertation, the economic historian Leonie van Nierop (1879-1960) set up a household with her sister and which earned her the non-complimentary title 'studieuze juffer' in a correspondence among *Gids*-editors. Jane de Iongh, who likewise worked as an independent researcher and wrote bestselling studies of Dutch women rulers, lived with female 'friends'.³⁷ Marietje van Winter, professor emeritus of Utrecht University recently reported in *NRC-Handelsblad*, that her father Pieter van Winter once 'dryly' remarked, 'my daughters do not marry, they earn a doctor's degree', thereby assessing that these two activities were mutually exclusive for women.³⁸ The social-economic historian Sini Regtdoorzee Greup-Roldanus was married, but had it mysteriously made known to the authorities that her marriage would not be blessed by children so that she could keep her teaching position.³⁹ Her husband, dying relatively early, was not a visible presence in her life.

Other than the 'brides of science' repertoire that being unmarried could suggest, is Annie Romein-Verschoor's self-representation as 'het meisje voor halve dagen' (the part time maid servant) in her entertaining autobiography *Omzien in verwondering*.⁴⁰ This designation referred to her voluntary subservience to her husband Jan Romein, but also to her refusal to join the competition for professional fame and success. This is interesting from the perspective of persona. By emphasising her 'laziness' as an important motivation for becoming a 'part time maid servant', it seems Romein-Verschoor tried to escape the gendered stereotype of the studious (*studieuze, ijverige*) woman, which is the accolade that so often smothered women scholars' talents even when they were praised. At the same time it meant that she had not completely abandoned her feminine duties. By blatantly posing as lazy, in the end Annie Romein presented herself somewhat paradoxically as someone who takes responsibility for her actions such as allowing herself to be lazy and voluntarily subjecting herself to her husband Jan, while at the same time effortlessly reaching some degree of success. The latter is a well-known identity plot in women's autobiographies that according to the

37 For all three see Els Kloek (ed.), *1001 vrouwen uit de Nederlandse geschiedenis* (Nijmegen 2013).

38 In the NRC-series 'Sexism in science' (about which she had a lot to tell though she'd rather be interviewed about her work! 23 August 2015).

39 Maria Grever, 'Historische reconstructie en imaginatie. Het oeuvre van de historica

dr. S.C. Regtdoorzee Greup-Roldanus', in: *Geleerde vrouwen. Special issue Jaarboek voor Vrouwengeschiedenis* 9 (Nijmegen 1989) 195-212, 197.

40 Annie Romein-Verschoor, *Omzien in verwondering. Herinneringen van Annie Romein-Verschoor* I (Amsterdam 1970) 159.



Photograph of Marie Curie.

Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division,
the George Grantham Bain Collection, reproduction
number LC-DIG-ggbain-07682.

American historian Jill Ker Conway goes back to the mystic presentation of self as instrument of God. In the nineteenth century, in their autobiographies professionally successful women like Jane Addams developed an 'I don't know how I did it' narrative that prevented women from being perceived as too aggressively individualistic and actively aiming at professional goals or achievement.⁴¹ In Annie Romein's case (and more in general), this gendered narrative of unsought success also played on the scholarly repertoires of disinterestedness and ingenuity: she was in no way aiming at scholarly success or professional recognition, she was too lazy for that! It was just coming to her by a stroke of genius. Interestingly Jan Romein's scholarly identity also partly hinged on the scholarly repertoire of 'disinterestedness' and independence, as he was wealthy enough to be able to renounce a 'leraarsbaantje' (teaching position at a secondary school) and work in his protected if not guarded study at home until he was appointed (at first as an underpaid extraordinary) professor in 1938.⁴²

That women tried to become invisible 'as women' in the halls of science can finally be seen in their fashioning a kind of 'unfashionability'. Think of the black dresses that the Dutch physician Aletta Jacobs (1854-1929) wore as a student, or that Marie Curie accustomed herself to in order to underline her ascetic scientific identity. As exceptions to the standard of being a scientist or scholar all women scholars and scientists knew (and know) the importance of clothing as an aspect of the social world of science. Although in caricatures learned women are often depicted as bespectacled and ugly, it is still to be seen how women used dress and appearance to fashion a reliable identity as a scholar or a scientist. In laboratories it is relatively easy to use lab coats in order to make bodies and femininity invisible, but for scholars there was simply no uniform. It seems that for a long time the professional woman scholar's costume was shirt and skirt; later the women's suit was invented and made fashionable, but only in sedate colours and sturdy fabric for scholars and scientists. For a woman to be perceived as a scholar, meant not wearing bright colours such as pink or yellow, a revealing neckline, high heels or abundant make-up. In fact a man's suit was the standard to which women had to try to conform, as can still be seen in promotion rules that for men prescribe a morning coat, for women an inconspicuous dress preferably in blue.

Conclusion

Knowledge cannot be recognised as valuable when it is not performed in a way that the scholar or scientist is seen as a trusted member of the scientific or scholarly community, as a subject in the Foucaultian sense of the word who

41 Jill Ker Conway, *When Memory Speaks: Reflections on Autobiography* (New York 1998).

42 Romein-Verschoor, *Omzien in verwondering*, 157.

has the authority and power of definition. In classical rhetoric the importance of ethos besides logos and pathos has always been seen as crucial for the power of persuasion; but what exactly is seen as relevant to that ethos, how wide is the circle of meaningful practices drawn? In this, I follow Shapin, Wesseling and Etzemüller among others who claim that reliability, trustworthiness or *Glaubwürdigkeit* is at the heart of persona, and resides in an ever changing mixture of new and old repertoires of scholarly and social conduct and identity formation. Part of such repertoires are the disciplinary virtues and skills such as patience, attention for detail, honesty and self-sacrifice, that are well worth studying as Paul and Tollebeek have shown. However, in my view, virtues and skills are only part of the story as they do not address wider social and more intrinsically embodied aspects of identity that contribute to scholarly credibility and authority as well.

Studying biography in which the scholarly persona is central can help us to answer questions such as: how did groups or individual scholars and scientists with diverse backgrounds in terms of class, gender, race and religion, appropriate, adapt and reject collective scholarly identities, old and new repertoires of scholarly being and performance? What are repertoires of identity formation that lack credibility and when are social aspects of identity in the way of the development of a trustworthy scholarly persona? Or the other way around – how can people overcome such obstacles by fitting together (*bricoler*) a new scholarly identity? Only then can we begin to understand why and how scholars in specific contexts acquired specific identities as scholars, getting their knowledge recognised, why some succeeded in doing so and others failed, and what that means for our understanding of knowledge. In that sense it is really practical epistemology.

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